

# **Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot**

## ***Charlotte, NC***

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

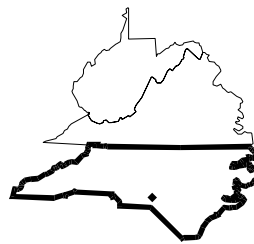
## **BACKGROUND**

EPA selected the City of Charlotte for a Brownfields Pilot. The Brownfields Pilot area is adjacent to uptown in the Wilmore neighborhood and South End business district, which includes Charlotte's earliest industrial area, dating back to the late 1800s. Brownfields redevelopment is an important component of Charlotte's effort to revitalize its urban neighborhoods, which are showing significant signs of economic distress and physical deterioration. Approximately 1.5 million public dollars in physical improvements within the South End area have leveraged the private redevelopment of several mills into retail, entertainment, and residential uses. However, there are many brownfields sites where redevelopment has yet to occur.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The city plans to return brownfield properties to productive use by creating jobs, contributing to the tax base, providing needed community services, and creating environmentally safe sites. The city, in conjunction with the state, is establishing clear guidelines for appropriate levels of cleanup on selected sites through community consensus and innovative cleanup plans. Additionally, the city is educating

## **PILOT SNAPSHOT**



*Charlotte, North Carolina*

**Date of Announcement:**  
September 1996

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Pilot targets redevelopment efforts in the city's Wilmore neighborhood and South End business district.

### **Contacts:**

Charlotte Neighborhood  
Development Key Business,  
Business Services Section  
(704) 336-4522

U.S. EPA - Region 4  
(404) 562-8493

Visit the EPA Region 4 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/region4/wastepps/brownfpgs/bf.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

lenders on managing brownfields risk for private sector investment. Volunteer partners (including law firms, lending institutions, environmental professionals, neighborhood representatives, and universities) provide assistance with addressing potential regulatory barriers.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

*The Pilot has:*

- Held three community meetings, with more than 50 people attending each session. Meetings have focused on defining risk and contamination, and were a joint effort by the brownfields partners. Partners presented information on the environmental and liability content related to the targeted area and staffed tables for participants to ask specific questions at the end of the meetings;
- Created a site selection committee to select the actual brownfields sites based on input from the community meetings and the criteria cited in the work plan. A representative from each of the following groups is included in the team: South End Development Corporation; Wilmore Neighborhood Association; West Enterprise Community; Dilworth Community Development Corporation; the Sierra Club; a real estate industry representative; a banker; and an environmental engineer;
- Identified, through the work of the site-selection committee, seven cleanup and redevelopment projects for assessment that offer significant public benefits to the community;
- Completed environmental assessments on the following seven sites: Thomas Construction, Camden Square project, Truck Equipment Manufactures' expansion, South Tryon, Cost Effective Maintenance, Wilmore CDC housing project, and Westover Shopping Center; and
- Created the following: a brownfields project logo as a community outreach tool; invitations to the first community meeting; door hangers to inform residents about community meetings; and reminder

postcards in conjunction with efforts to publicize the community meetings. The Pilot was recognized for these strong community outreach materials, receiving a Saavy Award from the national City County Marketing and Communications Association.

*The Pilot is:*

- Completing cleanup plans for two more sites in the targeted area; and
- Keeping community residents and partners informed of the activities of the Pilot.

## LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Charlotte Pilot has been the catalyst for related activities, including the following:

- Cleanup activities have been completed at three properties, and redevelopment activities have begun at four sites.
- The Pilot has leveraged a total of \$45,483 in assessment funding and \$203,938 in cleanup funding.
- The Pilot has leveraged the creation of 400 redevelopment jobs and a total of \$17,310,000 in redevelopment funding, including \$14.5 million for the Camden Square site, \$2.5 million for the Truck Equipment Manufacturing site, \$175,000 for the Cost Effective Maintenance site, \$75,000 for the Gaines Brown Design site, and \$60,000 for the Thomas Construction site.
- The city created a Facade Improvement Grant program and an Infrastructure Grant program to remove blight and make infrastructure improvements in specific business districts, including the Pilot area.
- North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry and other Pilot partners drafted state legislation simplifying the regulatory review process and offered covenants-not-to-sue to non-responsible owners whose cleanup and redevelopment plans have been completed and approved by the state. City staff

participated in ongoing dialogues with North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources regarding proposed state legislation. The Brownfields Property Reuse Act was signed by the Governor in August 1997.

- Pilot partners sponsored a conference for bankers, titled "New Lending Opportunities," with more than 60 people in attendance, including 29 lenders representing 10 banks from 8 cities in North Carolina and South Carolina.
- The city produced a segment on the Brownfields Project for the public access television talk show that discussed the impact of brownfields redevelopment in Charlotte and announced the first community meeting.